

Now you see it; now you think you see it

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Some scientific journals are adopting security measures, including digital photo testing, to halt manipulation of data by authors engaged in fraud.

The Journal of Cell Biology is using a test that reveals 25 percent of all accepted manuscripts since 2002 have contained one or more manipulated illustrations, violating the journal's guidelines, Michael Rossner of Rockefeller University, the executive editor, told The New York Times. The editor of the journal, Ira Mellman of Yale, said most cases were resolved when the authors provided originals. "In 1 percent of the cases we find authors have engaged in fraud," he said.

To counter such manipulations, Rossner and Mellman adopted guidelines that require nothing be done to any part of a submitted illustration that didn't affect all other parts equally. They then began checking all submitted illustrations through Photoshop to see if new features had been added.

The journal Science has adopted the Journal of Cell Biology's guidelines. Deputy Editor Katrina Kelner told the Times, "Something like this is probably inevitable for most journals."

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